

Having described the invention, the following is claimed:

1. Apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle that has a windshield and a roof including a front header, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable windshield curtain inflatable away from the roof to a position between the windshield and a vehicle occupant, said windshield curtain having a stored condition in which said windshield curtain is positioned in a recess that extends into a forward facing surface of the front header.

2. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said recess is presented facing toward the windshield of the vehicle.

3. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein the windshield overlies a portion of the front header, said windshield curtain when in said stored condition being positioned in said recess underlying said portion of said front header.

4. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein the front header has a length extending across a width of the vehicle, said recess extending along a portion of the length of the front header.

5. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said windshield curtain when in said stored condition positioned in said recess has an elongated configuration extending laterally across a width the vehicle.

6. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein the vehicle includes a headliner underlying the roof, said windshield curtain when in said stored condition being positioned between the roof and the headliner.

7. The apparatus recited in claim 6, wherein said windshield curtain when in said stored condition is positioned between the front header and the headliner.

8. The apparatus recited in claim 6, wherein said windshield curtain is mounted on the headliner.

9. The apparatus recited in claim 6, wherein said windshield curtain forms part of a module, said module comprising a housing connected with the headliner, said windshield curtain being supported in said housing.

10. The apparatus recited in claim 9, wherein said module further comprises an inflation fluid source for providing inflation fluid for inflating said windshield curtain.

11. The apparatus recited in claim 9, wherein said module further comprises a fill tube for delivering inflation fluid from said inflation fluid source to said windshield curtain.

12. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein the front header comprises overlying upper and lower sheets of material connected with each other at selected locations along front and rear longitudinal edges of the front header where said sheets of material are in abutting engagement with each other, portions of said upper and lower sheets between said longitudinal edges being spaced from each other to form a structure

reinforcing portion of the front header, said recess being formed in said lower sheet of material.

13. The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said windshield curtain is inflatable to a position between an instrument panel of the vehicle and a vehicle occupant.

14. Apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle that has a windshield and a roof including a front header, said apparatus comprising:

a headliner underlying the vehicle roof; and

a module connected with the headliner and positioned between the headliner and the vehicle roof, said module comprising an inflatable windshield curtain supported on the headliner and being positioned in a recess formed along a forward facing portion of the front header, said windshield curtain being inflatable away from the roof to a position between the windshield and a vehicle occupant.

15. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein said module further comprises a housing connected with the headliner, said housing being positioned in said

recess, said windshield curtain being supported in said housing.

16. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein said recess is presented facing toward the windshield of the vehicle.

17. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein the windshield overlies a portion of the front header, said module being positioned in said recess underlying said portion of said front header.

18. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein the front header has a length extending across a width of the vehicle, said recess extending along a portion of the length of the front header.

19. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein said module when positioned in said recess has an elongated configuration extending laterally across a width the vehicle.

20. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein said module further comprises an inflation fluid source

for providing inflation fluid for inflating said windshield curtain.

21. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein said module further comprises a fill tube for delivering inflation fluid from said inflation fluid source to said windshield curtain.

22. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein the front header comprises overlying upper and lower sheets of material connected with each other at selected locations along front and rear longitudinal edges of the front header where said sheets of material are in abutting engagement with each other, portions of said upper and lower sheets between said longitudinal edges being spaced from each other to form a structure reinforcing portion of the front header, said recess being formed in said lower sheet of material.

23. The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein said windshield curtain is inflatable to a position between an instrument panel of the vehicle and a vehicle occupant.